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## INTRODUCTORY SESSIONAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE FORTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE SCHOOL OF PHARMACY,

October 5, 1887,

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MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,—I take it as a considerable compliment that I have been invited to deliver to you the Inaugural Address of this Session. I long ago made it a rule of my life not to refuse any duty which came before me, provided that I felt it at all within my power to do it, and although I am as conscious as anyone that many more fit persons might fill my place to-night, I venture to accept the position offered to me, and to do my best not to mis-spend the few minutes at my disposal. First, I may claim some small right to address you on this occasion, because the subjects of materia medica and pharmacy have always had great attractions for me. I may say that I was drawn towards medicine by a love, for its own sake, of the healing art, and I, consequently, approached

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my profession from its therapeutical side. I have never lost my interest in this part of the physician's art. It is too much forgotten in these days that the two main duties of the physician are first, to discover exactly what is wrong, and, secondly, to apply measures for relief and the promotion of cure.

A complete diagnosis is but half of his work. I repeat, therefore, that the reason for a physician's existence in our social system is that he shall treat disease with a view to cure it.

I had the good fortune to be taught by several masters of therapeutics and pharmaceutical art. In Liverpool I was trained first under Baker Edwards, and subsequently under Birkbeck Nevins. At Edinburgh I diligently attended the prelections of Christison, illustrated profusely by the resources of the great University Museum. One of my first medical books was 'Gray's Supplement to the Pharmacopœia,' edited by Redwood, your eminent Emeritus-Professor, and at an early period of my studies I made almost every salt and preparation in the Pharmacopœia of 1851. Hence, I may at least claim some acquaintance, though, indeed, what I might term a pre-scientific one, with the lines of your present and future studies here, and I can offer you some sympathy, and a not unintelligent interest in your pursuit of them.

And now, having said too much about myself, I may pass on to welcome, in the name of the Society, its Officers and Professors, all those who present themselves on these benches to-night for the first time. I know well what must be the feelings of many of you. You have come from distant homes, it may be, to this vast and busy metropolis, with good heart and purpose to try and lay a solid and

worthy foundation for your future careers. You have done wisely and well. If your relations have made an effort to secure for you the great advantages offered by this Society, they may feel sure that they are giving you the best help, and are promoting in the best way your potential usefulness in the future. You have to prove yourselves worthy of any sacrifice they may have made for you, and you will do this by beginning at once, to-morrow, to display energy and earnestness in your work. I lay stress on your setting to work at once. If a freshman is languid at his first start, he too commonly proves a failure ever after. Take my word and my experience for it, the man who buckles to, forthwith, on his entry into a school will be the man who will come out well, if not brilliantly, at the end of his curriculum. London with all its scientific life, its feverish and intense fervour, has also its seamy side, and innumerable traps are set for such as you who come here from simple, honest, God-fearing homes. I bid you beware of these beguiling gins, and always remember the eternal truth contained in the words of the wise King who wrote that, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." Thus warned, you will not be entangled by the seductions of idle companions, and you will be worthy of yourselves and of those who love you best. Steady and regular work will well avail to keep you in good company and to unfit you for courses unworthy of English gentlemen. Take St. Jerome's advice: "*Fucito aliquid operis, ut semper te diabolus inveniat occupatum.*" That unpleasant complaint home-sickness, too, is best cured, as I well remember, by hard work. Having drifted somewhat into a by-way of moral therapeutics, I must

next offer in the names of your President and officers hearty congratulations to those of you who have come forward to receive prizes. It is always pleasant to succeed, and it is always wise to try to succeed. One success in life, especially at the outset, is very apt to lead to others. There is, however, ample compensation for those who, having tried, have failed to reach the full measure of attainable success. Their efforts do not fail to be fruitful, though their crop of successes may ripen later on. I find little sympathy for those who do not strive or aspire to excel in their work, yet I suppose there must be always some easy-going people in the world, and, indeed, there are not plums enough that everyone may secure one in the struggle.

I pass now to refer to some changes that are in progress amongst you. I have already mentioned the name of Dr. Redwood, your Emeritus-Professor of Chemistry, a name honoured by pharmacists all over the world. Dr. Redwood is the Nestor of your body. You have, as your senior professor, Dr. Attfield, a man whose energy and excellence are known to me on several accounts, and not least because, as a member of the Pharmacopœia Committee of the Medical Council, I come into relation with him as the Reporter on the British Pharmacopœia.

Your Professor of Botany and Materia Medica has retired, and in Mr. Bentley you lose a well-known teacher and authority in those subjects. I am glad that his place is now worthily filled by Professor Green, but it is always painful to see familiar faces drop out of the ranks. You can still be thankful you have had Mr. Bentley, and you can rejoice that he retires as Emeritus-Professor,

with plenty of working power left in him.\* In pure chemistry and chemical physics you have the advantage of a teacher so eminent as Professor Dunstan has proved himself to be. In Mr. Holmes you have an instructor in materia medica who is recognized as an authority on the subject, while pharmacy is in the able hands of Mr. Joseph Ince. But in addition to your long-established courses of study here, I have especially to congratulate you on the higher flights to which you properly aspire.

In your new laboratories for research you seek henceforth to do work which falls well within your power, work which hitherto has been so laborious as to be almost prohibitory, and perhaps not strictly within the legitimate lines of investigation, for many of those who have pursued them. I refer to purely chemical, botanical, and pharmaceutical work, which up to this time has mainly been done individually by eminent members of your Society, and occasionally by a few therapeutists who were specially qualified to do it.

This is not within the limits of therapeutical research, properly so called. But so elaborate and tedious is this work, that years must elapse before a practising physician and teacher can compass the

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\* I may here express my regret that botany is now ejected from the curriculum of medical students who do not aspire to university degrees. I protested against that decision, my belief being that the mental training of botany was peculiarly fitted to prepare the student for the practice of medicine, not in virtue of any specific and direct knowledge of plants thus acquired, which is soon forgotten, but because of the habits of observation and discrimination necessarily entailed by this study. Its omission, too, as a part of general biological training I take to be very serious.

complete pharmaceutical research necessary for any one new drug. Henceforth, you will achieve this in your new laboratories, and give the *imprimatur* of this Society to your pharmaceutical researches, thus setting free therapeutic investigators to their proper studies.

Such subdivision of labour is now inevitable, and with the impetus your work here will give to therapeutics proper, we may fairly anticipate useful results. To endow, as you propose to do, such higher research, is, indeed, a very worthy use to make of any funds you may happen to accumulate.

In reviewing, as I may, the position of the pharmacists of this country during the last quarter of this century, I cannot fail to be struck with the great advance made in your work both as a science and an art. I note the improved quality of the work done, no less than the higher social position and characters of the men who have accomplished it and now keep the forefront.

I recall the ordinary druggist of my boyhood, and while remembering that he was almost always a worthy, intelligent, and kindly man, I know now that he was too commonly an imperfectly educated and untrained man, even in his own department. In many parts of the country, if not, indeed, so forlorn a person as Romeo's apothecary, he was more dependent by far on ancillary parts of his business than is now, happily, the case. His guaiacum bottle was very blue, and his liquorice root very hard (as I knew to my personal discomfiture), his nitrate of mercury ointment was not unlike choice Gorgonzola cheese, and there was little of the vesicatorial element left in his bottle of lytta. Without doubt, a very altered state of matters now prevails. In the



smallest town to-day may be found members or associates of your Society, and your diploma carries with it such credentials as entirely satisfy the medical profession and those of the laity competent to judge (not too many, by the way) of the high degree of competence that has been certified in the possessor of it. Not only is confidence felt, and rightly felt, as to the training and skill of your diplomates, but there is something better, if possible, than this, and that is, an assurance that your Society alone certifies those who by high personal character, moral rectitude, and a fine sense of honour, are fit to be intrusted with the important public duties pharmacists are called to discharge. I take it therefore, always and everywhere, that the possessor of your diploma is an honourable, well-educated, and dependable man, and I am entirely content to trust him.

These considerations lead me at once to offer some remarks upon a delicate matter, but one which has been recently brought into prominence in respect of the Apothecaries of England and Ireland. I refer to the dispensing of medicines by members of my own profession.

I had hoped that this system was likely to come to an end, and believed that the necessity for it was hardly any longer existent. Other views have, however, prevailed. I hold the opinion that the necessity for this practice is now very small anywhere in the towns, and not so pressing as is believed in country practice. There can certainly be no doubt that, with the increasing numbers of highly qualified pharmacists that issue from the schools of London and Edinburgh, the necessity becomes annually, and everywhere, much lessened.

I affirm, without hesitation, the fact that your diplomates, as a rule, are better fitted to act as public dispensers than members of my profession, and I can therefore only express the hope that you may steadily wrest this sphere of work from men who have already too much else to do and think about, and who are less well-qualified than you to do it. I am aware that fears have been expressed that if you took over the dispensing duties of medical practitioners generally, you would be tempted even more than you now are to engage in treating disease both on your own premises and outside them. For my part I entertain no such apprehensions. On the contrary, I feel every confidence that your temptations in this direction would be diminished, and that you would abide more constantly in your own proper sphere. My experience cannot be singular in respect of finding that the higher the qualifications and attainments of pharmacists the less do they step out of their proper line of duty. To put it plainly, the better the pharmacist the less counter-prescribing he engages in. To put a complete stop to this practice I believe to be impossible. The poor and humble are less in fault here amongst your customers than the wealthy and well-born, as you and I very well know. However amiss may still be the practical workings of our political economy there is assuredly no lack of dispensary service for the former, and our younger physicians are not wont to be too busy, if called upon, to minister to the latter.

You ought, as I am sure you often do, and will more and more, to relegate these ignorant and miserly applicants respectively to their proper channels of relief. In any case I feel sure you

want none of these people, and they are never good for legitimate business.

You have my sympathy in witnessing the degrading and mischievous system of cheap dispensaries which is spreading so largely in all directions, a system altogether unworthy of my profession, and fraught with little, if any, benefit to the applicants. The only lessons for us to be learned from such improprieties are patience and increased continuance in uprightness and high-mindedness. *Nil fictum est diuturnum.*

I wish to allude in the next place to the somewhat frequent change of names which chemists are in the habit of making in the inorganic materia medica. This is perplexing and certainly of no practical avail to the medical practitioner. It is interesting now to read what was written just fifty years ago on this subject, by the late Dr. Graves of Dublin, one of the most eminent physicians and teachers of his day:—

“Let me now advert to a serious inconvenience which the chemists have imposed upon the medical world. They have, it appears, not only assumed to themselves the privilege of naming our medicines, but also changing those names every five or six years. I find that most chemical substances have in the space of fifty years, undergone at least five changes. Of course, as the march of chemistry progresses with accelerated speed, we may give our nomenclators credit for an increased tendency to revolutionize the chemical vocabulary, and conclude that they will change them five times within the next fifty years.

“In 1890, how will a man be able to recognize a substance whose name has undergone ten mutations? I am anxious to dwell on this defect as being preg-

nant with perplexity and confusion. It would almost seem as if some enemy to our profession had invented the chemical nomenclature for the purpose of retarding the advance of practical medicine. . . . We should come forward boldly and declare that we will not be made the slaves of names. . . . I therefore assert boldly that much benefit would accrue from reverting to the old system, and employing names which have no direct reference to the substances.\*

In the foregoing paragraphs, Dr. Graves made no allowance for other revolutions which work side by side with those he so vigorously declaimed against. The wheel of fashion revolves as certainly as does that of progress, and many of us have lived long enough to see that things once discarded, names amongst them, in deference to supposed scientific advance and requirement, quietly come back again and fall into their old places. We daily discover, also, that our forefathers were not all unwise men, and that in some ways, with all our boasted advances, we are really smaller men. It is at all events the case that in our recent Pharmacopœias, the synonyms of important preparations are given. This is not sufficiently carried out, and I would urge that the alternative synonyms be given as large print, and as full recognition, as the purely chemical names which are so apt to be changed either from caprice or from advance of knowledge.

To take an example,—calomel, for the practical physician, will always be calomel, whatever the chemists may call it, and the physicians of 2887

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\* Introductory lecture, session 1837. 'A System of Clinical Medicine,' p. 31. Dublin: 1843.

must be enabled to know what agent we in 1887 made use of under the name. We must always have regard to posterity, and we too much forget our duties to those who have to follow us in the various callings of life.

I think it is a matter of regret that we have on our tables 'extra' and unauthorized pharmacopœias.

Such volumes might well be issued, authoritatively, from time to time by the Medical Council between the editions of the British Pharmacopœia. I am not alone in thinking that our Pharmacopœia should contain the names and descriptions of many more drugs than are now found in it, together with the best directions for their several pharmaceutic preparations. We do not look to the Pharmacopœia for directions how and when to use drugs, but we do require authoritative and skilled pharmaceutic indications respecting them. Hence, I object to the periodical omissions of drugs which are made in succeeding editions. I thus lose a measure of authority for the employment of remedies I have learned to set store by and depend on. No one may tell me I am no longer to use a certain drug because it is expunged from the Pharmacopœia; but if it be so expunged, many pharmacists will consider themselves excused from retaining it on their shelves, and I risk the imperfect dispensing of a prescription. Happily, the list of omissions in the last Pharmacopœia was not a long one.

In thus expressing my opinion, I am not unmindful that I am at variance with that which was so ably laid before you in this place by my distinguished predecessor last year. He was especially apprehensive as to the overloading of our armoury with new and untried weapons, and so far I am fully

in accord with him. But I have my doubts as to the exclusion of old and long-tried remedies, some of which have possibly not had fair trial by modern practitioners, and have been crowded out in the race after new things.\*

There is a great tendency now to employ concentrated preparations, and to use drugs singly. This results from laboratory rather than from bedside research. There is less polypharmacy now than formerly, but I am satisfied that there is also less good prescribing than in my student days. The art of combining drugs has been much lost, and I think the practice of physic is by so much the poorer.

I have no doubt that these opinions will prove shocking in some quarters, but I am here simply to state what I believe to be true. It is, I think, certain that some drugs are more effectual in combination with others than when given by themselves. This is, however, a matter for the medical practitioner rather than for the pharmacist, albeit, the latter must acquire an accurate knowledge of the compatibilities of drugs, and, for this purpose, not only must he study the *materia medica* proper, but also so much of the subject of therapeutics as can be conveyed in systematic teaching here.

Objection has been taken very recently, in a quarter whence better things might have been expected, to the study of *materia medica* and theoretical therapeutics at the hands of pharmacists. To

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\* *Sir Henry Acland made particular reference to the retention of musk. I should have much regretted the omission of that drug. I use it largely, and have a high opinion of its value in certain conditions. I wish to have a strong tincture of it made officinal, containing about 5 grains in each drachm.*

implant such knowledge as this, it was affirmed, would be to equip pharmacists to treat disease, and grave apprehensions were accordingly raised. The best reply to such objections as these is to be found in the simple history of this Society. I suppose there has never been a time since its foundation, nearly half a century ago, when the subjects alluded to have not been carefully taught here. I cannot suppose, for instance, that the late Dr. Pereira taught materia medica here without also teaching to his classes such therapeutic knowledge as he deemed essential, and I will leave it to Mr. Bentley to say what was his practice in this respect.

The medical profession should have no fears or apprehensions respecting the learning and attainments of pharmacists, and if such there be in any quarter, so much the worse for that profession.

I believe that the position of pharmacists on the continent of Europe is a somewhat higher one than in this country. It is recognized more distinctly by the Governments. The education demanded is very thorough, and many of the pharmacists are accomplished scientific chemists.\* On the continent, professional positions, generally, count for more than with us. If your status to-day is not all that it ought to be in this country, I am not prepared to say where the failure lies. Good scientific work generally asserts itself, and comes to the front. It may be doubted whether our younger pharma-

\* They are not, however, permitted to prescribe for the sick. I was on one occasion led to imagine they did. On looking into a very beautifully designed and decorated *Apotheke* in the mediæval city of Nuremberg, I saw painted over an inner door the following ambiguous inscription :—*Pax intrantibus, Salus exeuntibus*.



cists pursue their science with the energy and thoroughness of their French and German *confrères*. There are certainly wanting opportunities, sufficiently lucrative in an expensive country like this, for young men, duly qualified, to pursue chemical and pharmacological researches for their own sake in a scientific spirit. Such opportunities are afforded on the continent, and are largely availed of. We find the fruits of these in the numerous synthetical products which crop up daily, more especially in Germany.

The direct consequences are more fruitful still to that country, and as depletory to our own. Such facts are plainly discreditable to us, and we sit still and accept them as if all was inevitable. I would ask, can our wealthy chemical manufacturers do nothing to wipe out this reproach? Are we calmly to continue to look to Germany as the chief source of some of our most largely used productions? I say, No. I refuse to believe that we cannot supply our own demands for such drugs as chloral hydrate and salicylate of sodium.

It is a libel on our manufacturing capacity, and an injustice to large classes of our operatives to affirm such inability. I am told that we are handicapped in various ways, as by the expense of labour here, and by a practically prohibitive duty on alcohol for manufacturing purposes. I think a fair representation of the case in a proper quarter would soon lead to a remission of such prohibitive duty, and the question of labour would not long press. The prevalence of severe competition in the drug trade has no doubt much to answer for in many ways. The trade has now assumed enormous proportions. It is ever a mystery to me how the population of the



globe, vast as it is, manages to consume the physic which is hourly being prepared for it. One may charitably hope that the waste is greater than is apparent, yet the actual consumption is enormous, both of legitimate and of illegitimate physic. I apprehend that competition is a good deal to blame for the importation of low-priced foreign drugs.

For cheap drugs, as for all cheap things, I have small regard. It has always appeared to me a solemn farce to employ any remedy of inferior quality. There should be no two qualities of important and powerful drugs. If these are to be of avail, none but the best should be employed. I feel sure that much skill and time are lost owing to bad drugs, and the consequences may sometimes be serious. So far I have only spoken of drugs of inferior quality. I shall say little respecting adulteration. We have now an Act in force which works fairly well, but it is probable that it should be more searching in order to abolish this criminal practice. The labour of detection is so great, and the penalty on discovery so lenient, that the only practical protection to the consumer is regard to the honour and standing of the producer. Drug business is one of confidence, and woe to him who degrades himself to forfeit his integrity and honour.

I must ask your pardon if I refer, lastly, to a great modern influx of preparations which are hardly to be called drugs, and must assuredly not be called foods.

I do not know what term to apply to the strange combinations I allude to. I take up any medical journal, and find about one-half of its pages filled with advertisements of the messes I am referring to. I shall not enumerate any of these. I know, and intend to know, nothing about ninety-nine out of every

hundred of them. I read of subtle combinations of physic and food, of the most ingeniously devised arrangements of almost every element that can be found in the human body. I read, too, that these preparations are designed to meet certain demands, and further, I find testimony from members of my own profession to the effect that they are likely to fulfil these demands, or have actually fulfilled them. With respect to these very numerous wares, I have to say that I recognize no place for most of them, and that I think they are harmful in various ways, not least in preventing patients who get them from securing a proper dietary and proper medication.

Food is one thing, and physic is another. The one should come fresh and redolent from our mother earth to be incorporated into our material frame ; the other, when it is required at all, should fulfil whatever purpose may be in view. I am sorry for any patient who cannot take fresh, or freshly prepared, aliment, and I seldom see any whose requirements cannot be met in this fashion. I do not say that food and medicine may never be given together, but I do affirm that if this must be, the medicinal agent should be freshly added as required. I, therefore, regard most of the preparations I have alluded to as unnecessary, unwholesome, and as constituting a retrograde step in the art of the pharmacist, and I regret to find even the measure of approval they so often obtain from my profession.

Not only are the pages of medical journals crowded with these advertisements, but they teem also with recommendations of numerous remedies which are foisted on us from America. Your art has reached a high state of excellence in that great

country, and solid contributions have come from the labours and ingenuity of American pharmacists. I fail, however, to see why their preparations of our commonest drugs should overflow from their vast continent into our little island, and commend themselves to the public as against our own productions.

While speaking of American pharmacy, I will add that I think it little less than an indelicacy and an impropriety, that in a public place, in London, which I will not mention, it should be possible for a child, or for anybody, to possess himself in exchange for a humble coin, if dropped into a piece of mechanism, of potent, and possibly mischievous, medicine. Degradation of pharmaceutic business can hardly step lower than this. Let us hope to see no extension at the hands of Englishmen of such catchpenny vulgarity.

I think there is a too prevalent sale of proprietary medicines, and I should like to find this practice steadily growing less. I think no educated chemist should be the medium for distributing the vaunted nostrums, produced by designing speculators for the purpose of extracting money from credulous and ignorant persons, and I do not regard this as legitimate business for men who seek a high place in the confidence of the public.

In respect of some of the business practices which I notice are carried on by pharmacists, especially in suburbs and country towns, I may refer to the sale of homœopathic remedies. I consider this very improper and misleading to the public, and I always regard it as no better than the display of a flag of distress on the part of those who vend such rubbish. No educated pharmacist can lend himself to the propagation of error, and retain his self-respect.

I am quite unaware that any solid contributions to the art of pharmacy have ever been made by homœopathic druggists, and I cannot believe that this Society approves of its members or associates vending their wares. Let it be remembered that such business is virtually carried on under the ægis of this Society. For my own part, I should carefully avoid any pharmacist who conducted it.

Surely the art of advertising has now reached its climax. Let me counsel you to have as little to do with it as possible. It must be that you become business men as well as professional men. The high ideal taught you in the latter and higher capacity here must ever hold in check and temper your conduct as men of business. There is no incompatibility between these two relations. You have excellent examples set you here in London, and in every large town. Aim high, and carry your aspirations high, and you will not fail to reach exalted places.

Begin as you mean to end, and pursue no line of practice that you may afterwards be ashamed of, and seek to drop. Industry, patience, rectitude, these three qualities will carry the youngest of my hearers to a good and honourable place in due time.

In bringing these observations to a close I must again ask your pardon for any plainness of speech I may have used. I have not come here merely to say things that I thought would please you, but I confess that I have availed myself of the privilege of addressing you to-night to state what I believe to be true, and to require stating, and I therefore venture to commend to your best attention the remarks I have made.

I do not believe that you will regard me as in-

imical because I tell you the truth, but I will very gladly hear any solid objections which may be made to my assertions and suggestions ; and in any case, I will say, lastly, that this Society, its officers, its members, its associates, and its pupils have my best wishes for their long-continued prosperity and national usefulness.

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W. I. RICHARDSON, Printer, 4 and 5, Great Queen Street, W.C.





